

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Project Overview	1-1
Introduction	1-1
Report Outline.....	1-3
SAFETEA-LU Planning Requirements.....	1-4
Federal Coordination Efforts	1-5
State of California Coordination Efforts.....	1-5
Funding Public Transportation in Rural California.....	1-7
Planning Documents and Relevant Research	1-12
Chapter 2. Project Methodology	2-1
Demographic Profile.....	2-1
Literature Review	2-1
Stakeholder Involvement and Public Outreach.....	2-1
Existing Transportation Services.....	2-2
Key Findings/Needs Assessment	2-2
Identification and Evaluation of Strategies.....	2-2
Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies.....	2-2
Chapter 3. Demographic Profile	3-1
Study Area Description and Demographic Summary.....	3-1
Population Characteristics	3-1
Population Growth.....	3-3
Projected Future Growth.....	3-4
Prison Population in Imperial County.....	3-4
Income Status	3-4
Employment	3-6
Access to a Vehicle.....	3-6
Population/Employment Density	3-7
Transit Dependency.....	3-11
Projected Demand for Public Transportation	3-11
Chapter 4. Existing Public Transit Service and Social Service Transportation Providers	4-1
Introduction	4-1
Imperial County Public Fixed-Route Transit.....	4-1
Private Fixed-Route Transit Services.....	4-3
Dial-a-Ride/Paratransit Services	4-4
Specialized Medical Public Transportation Service	4-6
Social Service Transportation Providers.....	4-7
Other Transportation Services	4-10
Connecting Transportation Services beyond the County.....	4-11
Chapter 5. Key Findings: Service Gaps and Mobility Needs	5-1
Existing Coordination of Services	5-1
Barriers to Coordination	5-4
Key Origins and Destinations.....	5-5
Gaps and Unmet Needs.....	5-8
Duplication of Services.....	5-12
Conclusion	5-13

Chapter 6. Identification of Strategies and Evaluation.....6-1

 Public Workshop6-1

 Evaluation Criteria.....6-3

 Identification of Strategies.....6-3

Chapter 7. Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies.....7-1

 Introduction7-1

 Implementing the Strategies7-1

 High Priority Strategies7-4

 Medium Priority Strategies.....7-7

 Low Priority Strategies7-7

 Other Opportunities to Coordinate7-8

Appendix A. Stakeholders

Appendix B. Workshop Publicity and Attendance

Table of Figures

Figure 1-1 Caltrans Coordinated Planning for California Counties1-2

Figure 1-2 Projected State of California Funding Sources/Amounts.....1-9

Figure 1-3 Funding Sources for Human Service and Public Transportation Programs1-14

Figure 3-1 Basic Population Characteristics (2000).....3-1

Figure 3-2 Population Growth for Imperial County 2000-2006.....3-3

Figure 3-3 Projected Senior Population Growth for Imperial County3-4

Figure 3-4 Income Status for Imperial County (1999).....3-5

Figure 3-5 Largest Employers in Imperial County.....3-6

Figure 3-6 Households with No Vehicle Available3-7

Figure 3-7 Imperial County 2000 Population / Employment Density.....3-9

Figure 3-8 Imperial County 2000 Transit Dependency Index.....3-13

Figure 4-1 Summary of Imperial Valley Transit Service.....4-2

Figure 4-2 Existing Fixed-Route Fare Structure.....4-3

Figure 4-3 Calexico Transit Routes.....4-4

Figure 4-4 AIM Transit Fares4-5

Figure 4-5 Quechan Indian Tribe Vehicles.....4-9

Figure 4-6 Taxi Services4-11

Figure 4-7 Imperial County Transit Services and Major Activity Centers.....4-13

Figure 5-1 Key Travel Destinations.....5-5

Figure 6-1 Summary List of Needs Presented at Workshop6-2

Figure 6-2 Strategies.....6-4

Figure 7-1 Agency Functional Skills and Resources.....7-2

Figure 7-2 Implementing High Priority Strategies7-5

Figure 7-3 Implementing Medium Priority Strategies7-7

Figure 7-4 Implementing Low Priority Strategies7-8

Chapter 1. Project Overview

Introduction

This Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Imperial County is sponsored by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). It is part of a larger planning effort overseen by Caltrans on behalf of 23 counties in non-urbanized areas within the State of California.

As described further in this report, federal planning requirements specify that designated recipients of certain sources of funds administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must certify that projects funded with those federal dollars are derived from a coordinated plan. Caltrans serves as the designated recipient in non-urbanized areas of California for funds subject to this plan.¹

These projects are intended to improve the mobility of individuals who are disabled, elderly, or of low-income status. This plan focuses on identifying needs specific to those population groups as well as identifying strategies to meet their needs.

Caltrans is sponsoring a statewide planning effort on behalf of the 23 rural counties for whom the funds are intended so that potential sponsors of transportation improvements may access the funds.² Imperial is one of these 23 counties, which are highlighted in the map in Figure 1-1.

¹ The term “ non-urbanized area” includes rural areas and urban areas under 50,000 in population not included in an urbanized area.

² Some plans in rural areas have been completed independently of this effort. Caltrans’ website lists the status of the plans at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/Coord-Plan-Res.html>.

Figure 1-1 Caltrans Coordinated Planning for California Counties



Report Outline

This report is organized in seven chapters, as described below:

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the project, its sponsorship by Caltrans, and federal planning requirements established by the passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, commonly referred to as SAFETEA-LU. This chapter also provides a summary of other key documents related to transportation planning in Imperial County that have helped inform this effort. In addition, it discusses federal and state roles in promoting coordination among public transit operators human service transportation providers. It also describes the funding environment for transportation in rural California.

Chapter 2 summarizes the steps taken and the methodologies used to prepare the Coordinated Plan. It provides a description of the process, from initial contact through final plan. This chapter also provides a summary of key documents related to transportation planning in Imperial County that have helped inform the effort.

Chapter 3 includes a demographic profile of Imperial County, which was prepared using US Census data, projections from the California Department of Finance, and information provided by the Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG). This information establishes the framework for better understanding the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: people with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status.

Chapter 4 documents the array of public transportation services that already exist in the area. These services include publicly and privately operated fixed-route services as well as transportation services provided or sponsored by other social services agencies. These were identified through review of existing documents, and through local stakeholder interviews.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of key findings, because an important step in completing this plan includes the identification of service needs. The chapter identifies major destinations, temporal and geographic gaps, and areas where service duplication exists. Much of the information incorporated into this chapter was identified through a series of stakeholder interviews conducted with representatives of human service agencies and transportation providers throughout Imperial County. The key findings were also developed through a review of existing documents and plans that also provide information on existing services and the need to improve them.

Chapter 6 presents strategies and solutions to address service gaps and unmet transportation needs. It also presents results of the three workshops with the public and stakeholders to develop strategies and evaluation criteria.

Chapter 7 presents an implementation plan for the most highly-ranked strategies. A potential project sponsor is identified, along with projected costs, potential sources of funds, and an overall assessment of how implementation of these strategies could address service gaps identified in Chapter 5.

SAFETEA-LU Planning Requirements

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed SAFETEA-LU into law, authorizing the provision of \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over six years through Fiscal Year 2009, including \$52.6 billion for federal transit programs.

Starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three programs in SAFETEA-LU, including the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), are required to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the FTA indicates that the plan should be a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.”³

The FTA issued program circulars, effective May 1, 2007, to provide guidance on the administration of the three programs subject to this planning requirement.

These circulars can be accessed through the following websites:

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html	Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html	Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316)
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html	New Freedom Program (Section 5317)

This federal guidance specifies four required elements of the plan, as follows:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit).
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service.
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.
- Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities.

³ Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458)

Federal Coordination Efforts

Coordination can enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate cost-effective solutions with available resources. Enhanced coordination also results in joint ownership and oversight of service delivery by both human services and transportation service agencies. The requirements of SAFETEA-LU build upon previous federal initiatives intended to enhance social service transportation coordination. Among these are:

- **Presidential Executive Order:** In February 2004, President Bush signed an Executive Order establishing an Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility to focus 10 federal agencies on the coordination agenda. It may be found at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040224-9.html
- **A Framework for Action:** The Framework for Action is a self-assessment tool that states and communities can use to identify areas of success and highlight the actions still needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation. This tool has been developed through the United We Ride initiative sponsored by FTA, and can be found on FTA's website: http://www.unitedweride.gov/1_81_ENG_HTML.htm
- **Previous research:** Numerous studies and reports have documented the benefits of enhanced coordination efforts among federal programs that fund or sponsor transportation for their clients.⁴

State of California Coordination Efforts

Assembly Bill 120 (1979)

Initiatives to coordinate human service transportation programs in the State of California have been largely guided by the passage of state legislation, the Social Services Transportation Improvement Act (Assembly Bill No. 120, Chapter 1120), often referred to as AB 120, in 1979. This law under California Government code 15975 required transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions to:

- Develop an Action Plan for the coordination and improvement of social service transportation services.
- Designate a Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) to implement the Action Plan within the geographic area of jurisdiction of the transportation planning agency or county transportation commission. CTSA's are considered eligible applicants of TDA Article 4.5 funds.
- Identify the social service recipients to be served and funds available for use by the consolidated or coordinated services.
- Establish measures to coordinate the services with fixed-route service provided by public and private transportation providers.
- Establish measures to insure that the objectives of the action plan are consistent with the legislative intent declared in Section 15951.

⁴ Examples include United States General Accounting Office (GAO) reports to Congress entitled *Transportation Disadvantaged Populations, Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation, but Obstacles Persist*, (June 2003) and *Transportation Disadvantaged Seniors—Efforts to Enhance Senior Mobility Could Benefit From Additional Guidance and Information*, (August 2004).

Senate Bill 826 (1988)

In 1988, Senate Bill 826 was introduced amending the Assembly Bill 120. It required the establishment of

- Measures for the effective coordination of specialized transportation service from one provider service area to another.

And required that

- Transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions shall every four years update the social services transportation inventory pursuant to Section 15973 and every two years shall update the action plan prepared pursuant to Section 15975 and submit these reports to the California Department of Transportation.

Assembly Bill 2647 (2002)

In 2002, Section 15975.1 was repealed, which no longer required the transportation planning agencies to submit an Action plan or inventory to the California Department of Transportation. The Department no longer has a role in the development of the Social Service Transportation Action Plan and will not be receiving information or reporting to the Legislature.

Role of Consolidated Transportation Service Agencies (CTSAs)

AB 120 authorized the establishment of CTSAs and recognizes them as direct claimants of TDA Article 4.5 funds. CTSAs are designated by Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) or, where RTPAs do not exist, by the Local Transportation Commission. Very little guidance exists, however, as to expectations or the roles of the CTSAs. As discussed below, TDA law requires that any rural county intending to use some of its TDA funds for streets and roads purposes establish a Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC); representatives from the CTSA are required to participate on the SSTAC. The SSTAC plays an active role and meets monthly to discuss transportation issues and to advise IVAG.

In Imperial County, IVAG has designated itself as the CTSA. In 1997, IVAG adopted a mission statement, a series of ten goals and related objectives for the CTSA. The CTSA's mission is:

“The effective planning and use of transportation services and resources through coordination, education and cooperation.”

The CTSA Goals and Objectives include a number of elements, include those to focus on providing information and referral services, and also to take an active role in coordination. Many of the objectives remain valid today and, although others could be updated to reflect the current regulatory and operating environment, the goals provide a good starting point for ramping up the role of the CTSA in facilitating coordination within the County. Some of the goals that are most relevant for the successful implementation of this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan include the following:

- To assist public and private health and human service agencies in providing or obtaining effective and efficient transportation. This includes providing ongoing technical assistance in the areas of brokerage assistance, scheduling and routing, and driver training and safety. This also includes an objective to find potential sources of revenue for transportation providers.

- To provide information and referral services, responding to transportation-related telephone calls and letters, and working with groups and agencies to assist seniors and people with disabilities to use fixed route transit.
- To resolve transportation problems by documenting recurring problems, gaps and barriers to transportation coordination, and attempt to find solutions.
- To increase the visibility of the CTSA and increase the acceptance of transportation coordination concepts and activities, through information distribution and active involvement with committees and organizations dedicated to transportation issues.

To provide the level of technical assistance and information and referral services, the CTSA will require additional staff resources.

Funding Public Transportation in Rural California

Transportation funding in California is complex. Federal and state formula and discretionary programs provide funds for transit and paratransit services; sales tax revenues are also used for public transit purposes. Transportation funding programs are subject to rules and regulations that dictate how they can be used and applied for (or claimed) through federal, state and regional levels of government. Additionally, some funds for social service transportation come from a variety of non-traditional transportation funding programs including both public and private sector sources.

Another complexity with federal funding programs is the local match requirements. Each federal program requires that a share of total program costs be derived from local sources, and may not be matched with other federal Department of Transportation funds. Examples of local match which may be used for the local share include: state or local appropriations; non-DOT federal funds; dedicated tax revenues; private donations; revenue from human service contracts; toll revenue credits; private donations; revenue from advertising and concessions. Non-cash funds such as donations, volunteer services, or in-kind contributions are eligible to be counted toward the local match as long as the value of each is documented and supported.

A review of federal, state and local funding programs for public transit agencies and social service providers is presented in Figure 1-3 at the conclusion of this chapter. The figure highlights the funding programs and their purpose, how funds can be used, who is eligible to apply and other relevant information. More detailed information on funding sources commonly used by public transit agencies in rural counties are described the following section.

Funding for public transportation in rural California counties is dependent primarily on two sources of funds: TDA funds generated through State of California sales tax revenues, and Federal Section 5311 funds intended for rural areas. These two funding programs are described in this chapter. A brief overview is provided of other funding sources that are available for public transit and social service transportation. Because the funding arena is complex and varied, this section on funding is not intended to identify all potential funding sources, but rather to identify the major sources of funding for public transit and human service transportation in rural California.

The three sources of federal funds subject to this plan (FTA Section 5316, 5317 and 5310), are described below. Caltrans serves as the designated recipient for these funds intended to be used in rural and small urbanized areas of the state. As designated recipient, Caltrans is

required to select projects for use of SAFETEA-LU funds through a competitive process, and to certify that projects funded are derived from the coordinated plan.

FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program

The purpose of the JARC program is to fund local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals. JARC funds are distributed to states on a formula basis, depending on that state's rate of low-income population, and then are awarded within California following a competitive process. This approach differs from previous funding cycles, when grants were awarded purely on an "earmark" basis. JARC funds will pay for up to 50% of operating costs and 80% for capital costs. The remaining funds are required to be provided through local match sources.

Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites
- Car-share or other projects to improve access to autos
- Access to child care and training

Eligible applicants for JARC funds may include state or local governmental bodies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), RTPAs, Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Program

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the workforce and full participation in society. The New Freedom Program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Persons benefiting from these funds are not required to be ADA-certified.

New Freedom funds are awarded following a competitive process, and are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services and alternatives, beyond those required by the ADA, that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. The same match requirements for JARC apply for the New Freedom Program.

Examples of eligible New Freedom Program projects include:

- Expansion of paratransit service hours or service area beyond minimal requirements
- Purchase of accessible taxi or other vehicles
- Promotion of accessible ride sharing or vanpool programs
- Administration of volunteer programs
- Building curb-cuts, providing accessible bus stops

- Travel training programs

Eligible applicants may include state or local governmental bodies, MPOs, RTPAs, LTCs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

FTA Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program

Funds for this program are allocated by a population-based formula to each state for the capital costs of providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Typically, vans or small buses are available to support nonprofit transportation providers; however, Section 5310 funding can also be used for operations if the service is contracted out. In California, a local match of 11.47% is required.

The following chart provides an estimate on the levels of JARC and New Freedom funding available for non-urbanized portions of the state from 2007 to 2009, as well as Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) funds for the entire state. As the designated recipient of these funds, Caltrans is responsible to define guidelines, develop application forms and establish selection criteria for a competitive selection process in consultation with its regional partners.

Figure 1-2 Projected State of California Funding Sources/Amounts

Designated Recipient	Fund Source	2007 \$ estimate	2008 \$ estimate	2009 \$ estimate
Caltrans	Small Urbanized and Rural JARC	4,467,218	4,791,210	5,052,269
Caltrans	Small Urbanized and Rural New Freedom	2,339,499	2,658,396	2,810,304
Caltrans	Elderly and Disabled Section 5310 Statewide (includes urban areas)	12,394,851	13,496,069	14,218,737

FTA Section 5311

Federal Section 5311 funds are distributed on a formula basis to rural counties throughout the country. The goals of the non-urbanized formula program are as follows:

- To enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation;
- To assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas;
- To encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all Federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services;
- To assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation; and
- To provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible.

A portion of 5311 funds is set aside for a Tribal Transit Program (TTP), which provides direct federal grants to Indian tribes to support public transportation on Indian reservations. For the period 2006 through 2009 the amount is \$45 million nationally. Awards are made directly to tribes by FTA through a competitive process. TTP was not intended to replace or reduce funds tribes receive from states under the Section 5311 program.

Fifteen percent of the Section 5311 apportionment is for the Intercity Bus Program, Section 5311(f). The Intercity Bus Program funds public transit projects that serve intercity travel needs in non-urbanized areas. Projects are awarded on a statewide competitive basis. This program funds operating and capital costs, as well as planning for service. As with most federal capital funds, the Section 5311 grant funding program provides 80% of capital costs with a 20% matching requirement. Section 5311 funds provide up to 50% of operating costs to support transit operations.

Transportation Development Act (TDA)

The California Transportation Development Act has two funding sources for each county or regional entity that are locally derived and locally administered: 1) Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and 2) State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF).

- **LTF** revenues are recurring revenues derived from ¼ cent of the retail sales tax collected statewide. The ¼ cent is distributed to each county according to the amount of tax collected in that county. In counties with a population of less than 500,000 as of the 1970 US Census, TDA funds may be allocated under Article 8 for transit services or for local streets and roads, pedestrian or bicycle projects.

Prior to approving TDA funds for purposes other than public transportation, specialized transportation, or facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, the local transportation planning agency is expected to consult with its local SSTAC and conduct an assessment of transit and determine whether there are unmet transit needs, and whether or not those needs are “reasonable to meet.” Each RTPA is required to adopt definitions of “unmet transit need” and “reasonable to meet.” Any unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet must be funded before funds can be allocated for streets and roads.

- **STAF** are revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels. STAF is allocated annually by the local transportation commissions based on each region’s apportionment. Unlike LTF which may be allocated to other purposes, STAF revenues may be used **only** for public transit or transportation services.

State Transportation Improvement Program

To receive state funding for capital improvement projects, such as new vehicles or other capital equipment, projects must be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program, or STIP. The STIP is a multi-year capital improvement program that includes projects programmed with state funds. Local agencies should work through IVAG to nominate projects for inclusion in the STIP.

Other Funding Sources

Older Americans Act (OAA)

The Older Americans Act was signed into law in 1965 amidst growing concern over seniors’ access to health care and their general well-being. The Act established the federal

Administration on Aging (AoA), and charged the agency with advocating on behalf of an estimated 46 million Americans 60 or older, and implementing a range of assistance programs aimed at seniors, especially those at risk of losing their independence. Transportation is a permitted use of funds under the Act, providing needed access to nutrition and other services offered by the AoA, as well as to medical and other essential services required by an aging population. No funding is specifically designated for transportation. However, funding can be used for transportation under several sections of the OAA, including Title III (Support and Access Services), Title VI (Grants to American Indian Tribes), and the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) program.

Regional Centers

While Regional Centers are nonprofit private corporations, they were established by state legislation. They receive public funds under contract to the California Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services and support for individuals with developmental disabilities. There are 21 regional centers with more than 40 offices located throughout the state. Transportation is a critical component of Regional Centers because clients need specialized transportation services for traveling to and from sheltered workshops. It is the responsibility of each Regional Center to arrange their client's transportation. Regional Centers are primarily funded with a combination of state General Fund tax dollars and Federal Medicaid funds. The primary contractual relationship is with the State Department of Developmental Services.

Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)

The Legislature appropriated \$20 million from the Public Transportation Account in FY06-07 for grants to public agencies statewide, seeking to provide transit services specifically for farm workers. The intent of the AWTP is to provide safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transportation services, utilizing vans and buses, to agricultural workers commuting to/from worksites in rural areas statewide. The emphasis of the AWTP will be to implement vanpool operations similar to the successful Agricultural Industries Transportation Services (AITS) program ongoing in Southern San Joaquin Valley, transporting agricultural workers to regional employment sites. The California Department of Transportation administers the AWTP. It is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010.

Private Foundations

Many small agencies that target low-income populations are eligible for foundation grants. Typically, foundation grants are highly competitive and require significant research to identify foundations appropriate for transportation of the targeted populations.

Tribal Casino Transportation Programs

Tribes with casinos in some counties have indicated an interest in coordinated transportation efforts. They may have funds available to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle or to subsidize plans to transport employees to and from the worksite.

Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

Organizations such as the Rotary Club, Soroptomists, Kiwanis, and Lions often pay for special projects. For transportation, they might pay for or help contribute toward the cost of a new vehicle or a bus bench or shelter near senior citizen housing. These organizations might also pay for trip reimbursement for after school or child care.

Employers

Employers who are in need of workers are sometimes willing to underwrite transportation in order to fill their labor needs. Employers sometimes contribute to a flex route night bus, a subsidized car-sharing program or a shuttle or vanpool to their employment site.

Planning Documents and Relevant Research

To learn more about existing studies or reports relevant to this plan, the consultant team conducted a literature review, with key findings highlighted below.

Public Transit Services Fare Analysis (2007)

Public outreach efforts revealed that most riders consider Imperial Valley Transit fares to be fair and reasonable and many users commented that they like the system's 20-ride punch cards. Although riders were not eager for a fare increase, many said they would be willing to pay a higher fare if certain service extensions were made, such as more frequent express service, all day express service, earlier morning service or Sunday service. At Imperial Valley College (IVC), several students thought a transit pass valid for an entire semester would be a good idea because it would commit students to ride the bus on a regular basis and suggested the pass be priced low, ranging between \$25 and \$30. Other riders thought a monthly pass would be convenient, provided it was priced "right." Some riders mentioned a day pass offering unlimited use for a 24 hour period would be useful for those needing to travel to several places in one day.

In addition to riders, several stakeholders were also interviewed. Many stakeholders expressed a desire for improved transit information. They made it clear that the public needs more information about transit services including a greater distribution network for sales of punch cards and tickets. Specific suggestions for disseminating transit information included notices on bulletin boards at local markets, information at IVC posted on its electronic message signs and advertisements in newspapers, on the radio, and on TV.

IVAG Short Range Transit Plan (2004)

The plan provides three main goals for the development of transit in the Imperial Valley:

- Ensure basic mobility for the residents of Imperial County
- Provide effective public transit services to meet the area's transportation needs
- Provide efficient service

Service is allocated according to demand and resources are allocated following a predefined order, in which accessing medical and social services have the highest priority.

Transit providers in the county were evaluated, and Imperial Valley Transit (IVT) was found to have low service efficiency when compared to its peers, and poor on-time performance. Opportunities suggested for IVT include: extension of evening service hours, promoting connections between inter- and intra-city services, improving service frequency, reducing operating cost by renegotiating contract, and increasing marketing and community outreach. The plan also suggests expanding fixed-route service to the city of Seeley and to Brawley Meat LLC, one of the largest employers in the county, and in addition, establishing a Brawley circulator shuttle to meet the growing public transportation demand in the city.

The county's ADA Paratransit service, Areawide Independent Mobility (AIM), was also evaluated. The system was found to have poor on-time performance, an aging fleet, and high no-show and cancellation rates, which can decrease effectiveness. Opportunities highlighted for AIM include extension of evening service hours, increasing marketing and community outreach, and improving on-time performance.

The county's five dial-a-ride services were also evaluated. Opportunities for the Brawley Dial-a-Ride include increasing marketing and community outreach, improving on-time performance, purchasing new vehicles equipped with vehicle lifts and improving no-show policies. Opportunities for Calexico Dial-a-Ride include increasing marketing and community outreach, extension of evening hours, improving on-time performance, and implementing a no-show/cancellation policy. Opportunities identified for El Centro Dial-a-Ride include increasing marketing and community outreach, extension of evening service, and implementing a no-show policy. Opportunities for Imperial Dial-a-Ride include increasing marketing and community outreach, and extension of morning and evening service. Opportunities for West Shores Dial-a-Ride also include increasing marketing and community outreach, and extension of morning and evening service.

IVAG Unmet Transit Needs Hearing (2008)

The recommendations from the unmet transit needs hearing that were found to be reasonable to meet include the following:

- Extend express routes during the new winter and existing summer IVC sessions
- Extend the route at 5:00 PM from Brawley through to Westmorland and Niland
- Add a bus stop on Dogwood Rd. near the residential development in Heber

The financial impact of these improvements is an additional \$19,888 subsidy to Imperial Valley Transit's annual budget.

Services that were not found to be reasonable to meet at this time include implementing a new roundtrip service on Saturdays between Seeley and El Centro, and increasing the frequency of the IVC express routes to earlier and later times in the day.

Figure 1-3 Funding Sources for Human Service and Public Transportation Programs

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Federal Sources						
Transportation Funding						
Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5309 Funds (Congressional Earmark)	Capital Projects for bus and bus-related facilities.	Capital projects only	Discretionary, varies annually	Public transit operators	20% for capital projects	Obtaining a Congressional earmark is in part dependent upon the "clout" of the local delegation and the funding amount can vary tremendously.
FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program	Local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals.	Capital projects and operations	Maximum of \$200,000 per project per year	MPOs, RTPAs, Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs. Can match with other federal funds.	Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/
FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Program	Supports <i>new</i> services and alternatives, beyond ADA that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities access transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services.	Capital projects and operations	Maximum of \$125,000 per project per year.	MPOs, RTPAs, LTCs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs. Can match with other federal funds.	Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/
FTA Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program	Providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities.	Capital projects only	\$12 million in FY 2008	Nonprofit agencies, public agencies	11.47% match	Typically vans or small buses are available to support nonprofit transportation providers. Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
FTA Section 5311	Enhance access for those living in non-urbanized areas and improve public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas.	Capital projects and operations	Formula based funding - Apportionment by area	Public agencies, local governments, tribal governments, nonprofit agencies	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs	Funds are distributed on a formula basis to rural counties throughout the country. A portion of 5311 funds (\$45 million nationally from 2006-2009) is set aside for a Tribal Transit Program, which provides direct federal grants to Indian tribes to support public transportation on Indian reservations.
FTA Section 5311(f)	Funds public transit projects that serve intercity travel needs in non-urbanized areas.	Capital projects and operations		Public agencies, local governments, tribal governments, nonprofit agencies	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs	Projects are awarded on a statewide competitive basis
Health and Human Services Funding ⁽¹⁾						
Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) (Department of Social Services)	Goals: 1. Reduce dependency, 2. Achieve self sufficiency, 3. Protect children and families, 4. Reduce institutional care by providing home/community based care, 5. Provide institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate.			Child Welfare Services, Foster Care, Deaf Access, Community Care Licensing, CDE Child Care, and Department of Developmental Services programs.	Unknown	Grant must be used for one of the goals of SSBG and cannot be used for certain purposes such as the purchase or improvement of land or payment of wages to any individual in social services. These funds are not allocated separately but are used in lieu of state general fund.
Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) (Department of Social Services)	Develop/strengthen integrated community health systems that coordinate health care services for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured, such as transportation coordination to improve access to care.		\$83 million	Public and private health care providers as well as social services, local government and other community based organizations.	Unknown	Build upon Federal programs that support entities serving low-income populations in an effort to expand and improve the quality of services for more individuals at a lower cost.

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) (Department of Community Services & Development)	Assist low income people in attaining the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency.			Community action agencies, low income individuals in CA (100% of Federal poverty level).	Unknown	None
Aging & Disability Resource Center Grant Program - Part of the President's New Freedom Initiative (Dept. of Aging)	Support state efforts to create "one stop" centers to help consumers learn about and access long-term supports ranging from in-home services to nursing facility care.		\$800,000 awarded to California in 2004	State of California	Unknown	None
HIV Care Formula Grants (Dept. of Health and Human Services)	Support programs designed to increase access to care and treatment for underserved populations, reduce need for costly inpatient care, reduce prenatal transmission, improve health status of people with HIV. A portion of the funds can be used for transportation.		\$2,073,296,000	State, local governments, public and nonprofit private agencies.	Unknown	None
Consolidated Health Center Program (Bureau of Primary Health Care)	Fund health centers that provide primary and preventative health care to diverse underserved populations. Health centers can use funds for center-owned vans, transit vouchers, taxi fare.			Community based organizations including faith based organizations.	Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Older Americans Act Title III B - Grants for Supportive Services & Senior Centers (Administration on Aging)	Funds are awarded by formula to State units on aging for providing supportive services to older persons, including operation of senior centers. May be used to purchase and/or operate vehicles and funding for mobility management services.	Capital projects and operations.	\$357 million	States and territories, recognized Native American tribes and Hawaiian Americans as well as non-profit organizations.	Unknown	None
Program for American Indian, Alaskan Native, & Native Hawaiian Elders (Administration on Aging)	This program supports nutrition, information and referral, multipurpose senior centers and other supportive services for American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian elders. Transportation is among the supportive services, including purchase and/or operation of vehicles and for mobility management.	Capital projects and operation	\$26 million	Recognized Native American tribes and Hawaiian Americans as well as non-profit organizations.	Unknown	None
Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (Center for Mental Health Services State Planning Branch)	Improve access to community-based health-care delivery systems for people with serious mental illnesses. Grants also allot for supportive services, including funding to operate vehicles, reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management.	Capital projects and operations.	\$430,000		Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Block Grant (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration)	Block grants provide funds for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. Transportation-related services supported by these grants may be broadly provided through reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management to recipients of prevention and treatment services.		\$1.78 billion	State of California	Unknown	States are required to expend their primary prevention services funds using six specific strategies: community-based processes, information dissemination, education, alternative activities, problem identification and referral, and environmental strategies. A seventh category, "other" strategies, can be approved on a limited basis.
Child Care & Development Fund (Administration for Children & Human Services)	Provide subsidized child care services to low income families. Not a source of direct transportation funds, but if child care providers include transportation as part of their usual services, covered by their fee, these services may be covered by voucher payments.		\$4.8 billion	States and recognized Native American Tribes	Unknown	None
Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance (Administration for Children and Families)	Promote and increase independence, productivity, inclusion and integration into the community of persons with developmental disabilities, and support national and state policy that enhances these goals. Funding provides special projects, reimbursement of transportation costs and training on transportation related issues.		\$11.5 million		Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Head Start (Administration for Children & Families)	Head Start provides grants to local public and private agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to children and families. Local Head Start programs provide transportation services for children who attend the program either directly or through contracts with transportation providers.		\$7 billion	Local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies	Unknown	The Head Start regulation requires that programs make reasonable efforts to coordinate transportation resources with other human service agencies in their communities.
TANF / CalWORKs (California work opportunity & responsibility to kids) (Department of Social Services)	Provide temporary assistance to needy families. Recipients are required to participate in activities that assist them in obtaining employment. Supportive services, such as transportation and childcare are provided to enable recipients to participate in these activities.			States and Federally recognized Native American tribes. Eligible families as defined in the TANF state plan	Unknown	TANF funds cannot be used for construction or to subsidize current operating costs. State and county funds in the CalWORKs program are used to meet the TANF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement and cannot be used to match other federal funds.
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (Department of Housing & Community Development)	Create or preserve jobs for low income and very low income persons.			Counties with less than 200,000 residents and cities of less than 50,000 residents	Unknown	Applicants cannot be participants on the US Department of HUD CDBG entitlement program.

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
State Sources						
Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)	Provide safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transportation services, utilizing vans and buses, to agricultural workers commuting to/from worksites in rural areas statewide.	Capital projects and operations	\$20 million in FY2006/07	Public agencies	No mandatory matching requirements	Administered by the Caltrans. Scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010.
Transit System Safety, Security and Disaster Response Account	Develop disaster response transportation systems that can move people, goods, and emergency personnel and equipment in the aftermath of a disaster.	Capital projects	Varies by county	Agencies, transit operators, regional public waterborne transit agencies, intercity passenger rail systems, commuter rail systems	None	Part of Proposition 1B approved November 7, 2006.
State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF)	Public transit and paratransit services	Capital projects and operations	Varies from year to year depending on appropriation to Public Transportation Account of which 75% goes to STA.	Allocated by formula to public transit operators	None	Revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels.
State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	Major capital projects of all types, including transit.	Transit capital projects	Varies from year to year depending on appropriation to Public Transportation Account of which 25% goes to STIP.			Determined once every two years by California Transportation Commission.
Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA)	Advance the State's policy goals of providing mobility choices for all residents, reducing congestion, and protecting the environment	Transit capital projects	\$600 million statewide in FY2007-08. \$350 million proposed for 2008-09.	Transit operators and local agencies who are eligible to receive STAF funds pursuant to California Public Utility Code Section 99313	None	Bond act approved by voters as Proposition 1B on November 7, 2006

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Regional/Local Sources						
Transportation Development Act (TDA) Articles 4 and 8 (1/4 cent sales tax)	Transit operating assistance and capital projects, local street and road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, pedestrian/bicycle projects	Capital projects and operations	Varies by county	Cities and counties. Allocated by population formula within each county.		Revenues are derived from 1/4 cent of the retail sales tax collected statewide, distributed according to the amount of tax collected in each county to a Local Transportation Fund in each county.
Transportation Development Act (TDA) Articles 4.5	Paratransit operating assistance and capital projects	Capital projects and operations	Up to 5% of the Local Transportation Fund revenue	Cities and counties and CTSA's		
Private Sources						
Tribal Casino Transportation Programs	Coordinating transportation efforts on Indian reservations	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	Wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	Some tribes have funds available to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle or to subsidize plans to transport employees to and from the worksite.
Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations	Variety of transportation services, especially capital improvements	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	May be interested in paying for bus benches or shelters
Employers	Variety of transportation services, especially capital improvements	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	Employers sometimes are willing to underwrite transportation to support their workers getting to/from worksite.

(1) Source: Caltrans, Division of Mass Transportation

Blank page

Chapter 2. Project Methodology

The four required elements of a coordinated plan, as outlined by FTA in the May 15, 2007 guidance for the JARC, New Freedom and Section 5310 programs are as follows:

- An assessment of current transportation services
- An assessment of transportation needs
- Strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified transportation needs (as well as ways to improve efficiencies)
- Implementation priorities based on funding, feasibility, time, etc.

This chapter describes the steps that were undertaken to develop these elements of Imperial County's Coordinated Plan.

Demographic Profile

A demographic profile of Imperial County was prepared using US Census data and data from IVAG. This step establishes the framework for better understanding the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: persons with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status.

The demographic profile is incorporated in Chapter 3 of this report.

Literature Review

The consulting team conducted a literature review of recently completed—or currently underway—planning efforts relevant to this Coordinated Plan. The purpose of this literature review is to learn about other planning activities in the County and to identify major transportation issues and concerns to ensure issues of importance are incorporated in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Elements of the literature review are included in Chapter 1.

Stakeholder Involvement and Public Outreach

Stakeholder involvement is an important element of this plan, and is required by SAFETEA-LU. As a first step, staff from the California Department of Transportation's Division of Mass Transportation (Caltrans) identified IVAG as the primary point of contact. The consulting team then collaborated with IVAG staff to identify key stakeholders to be included during the development of this plan. Stakeholder involvement was solicited primarily through a series of in-person and telephone interviews. The results of the interviews are described in Chapters 4 and 5. In addition, consulting team staff convened a kick-off meeting with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) in December 2007 with the goals of introducing SSTAC members to the project, and obtaining their feedback on project activities. In particular, the SSTAC and stakeholder involvement was critical in identifying unmet transportation needs, and In particular, the SSTAC and stakeholder involvement was critical in identifying unmet transportation needs, and obtaining feedback on project activities.

Stakeholders convened again in May 2008 to define strategies. Three public workshops were conducted that included the development of strategies and opportunities for enhanced coordination.

Existing Transportation Services

This step involves documenting the range of public transit and human service transportation services that already exist in the area. This process was initiated in July 2007 by Caltrans staff. To ensure all existing services have been identified and accurately described, the consulting team reviewed the inventory with key stakeholders and updated it in June 2008. The services in the inventory include publicly and privately operated fixed-route and dial-a-ride (paratransit) services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies. The description and corresponding maps of existing services are presented in Chapter 4.

Key Findings/Needs Assessment

An important step in completing this plan is to identify service needs or gaps. The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where—and how—service for the three population groups (individuals who are disabled, elderly, or of low-income status) needs to be improved.

The needs assessment for this plan was derived through direct consultation with stakeholders identified by the project sponsors, and through a review of existing documents and plans that also provide analysis of existing services and opportunities to improve them.

Identification and Evaluation of Strategies

On May 6 and 7, 2008, the consultant facilitated three public workshops: one in Brawley, one in El Centro and one in Calexico. The goal of the workshops was to confirm previously identified unmet transportation needs, confirm criteria to evaluate potential strategies, and identify and prioritize strategies for addressing the needs.

The consultant drafted proposed evaluation criteria to use when ranking the strategies and facilitated a discussion with workshop participants to develop a list of strategies. An interactive process directly involving workshop participants resulted in refining the list of strategies, and in prioritizing them. Chapter 6 presents the findings of that exercise.

Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies

As a final step in this planning process, an implementation plan was developed for each of the highly ranked strategies. The implementation plan identifies a potential lead agency with the institutional, operational and fiscal capacity to implement the proposed strategy; a timeframe for implementation; estimated costs; and potential funding sources, including potential use of SAFETEA-LU funds. This is presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 3. Demographic Profile

Study Area Description and Demographic Summary

Imperial County is located in the far southeast corner of California. The county borders San Diego County to the west, Riverside County to the north, Arizona to the east and Mexico to the south. The county seat is located in El Centro.

The county is the newest and one of the poorest counties in California. Imperial County encompasses approximately 4,482 square miles. Seventy-five percent of the county area is desert sand and rugged mountains, however the Imperial Valley area contains fertile agricultural land. In addition to the county seat, the county’s other cities include Calexico, Brawley, Imperial, Calipatria, Holtville, Westmorland, Heber, Seeley, Niland, Salton City, Desert Shores, Winterhaven, Salton Sea Beach, Bombay Beach, Ocotillo and Palo Verde.

Population Characteristics

Based on 2007 California Department of Finance estimates, the population of Imperial County is 172,600, nearly 21% higher than the 2000 Census figure of 142,361. Imperial County’s daytime workforce expands with a number of Mexican residents who hold jobs in the county. It is also presumed that the County’s population may, in fact, be even higher than estimated due to undocumented residents.

According to Census data, the population of El Centro comprises 27% of this total population. Calexico, the county’s second-largest city represents 19% of the county total, followed by Brawley, with 16%. The population of Imperial represents five percent of the total population in the county. A population comparison between the state of California, Imperial County and its four largest cities is shown in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1 Basic Population Characteristics (2000)

Area	Total Population	Percent of County Population	Percent Aged 65+	Percent with Disability	Percent Below Poverty Level
California	33,871,648		11%	19%	14%
Imperial County	142,361		10%	20%	23%
El Centro	37,801	27%	10%	21%	23%
Calexico	27,042	19%	11%	19%	26%
Brawley	22,096	16%	9%	20%	27%
Imperial	7,418	5%	6%	19%	12%

Source: 2000 Census

Seniors, People with Disabilities and Low-Income Residents

Although 2000 Census data may not accurately reflect the current conditions in the county, very little publicly available data provides information about specific population groups that are the focus of this plan: seniors, people with disabilities and the population below the poverty level. Information on the senior population was updated as of the 2006 American Community Survey, but the percentage figure is consistent with 2000 data. Thus, this summary relies on 2000 data, supplementing some of the data from other sources where available.

As of the 2000 Census, 10% of Imperial County residents were seniors over the age of 65, which is very similar to the statewide average of 11%, also shown in Figure 3-1. The percentage of residents with a disability is also similar to the statewide average (20% vs. 19%). However, 23% of the county population is living below the federal poverty level, which is significantly higher than the statewide average of 14%. In particular, Brawley has the highest percentage of residents living below the federal poverty level (27%). Nevertheless, in many of Imperial County's smallest communities, very high proportions of the population live in poverty.

The definition of "disability" varies. For this project, information cited is consistent with definitions reported in the Census 2000. It included two questions with a total of six subparts with which to identify people with disabilities.⁵ It should be noted that this definition differs from that used to determine eligibility for paratransit services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for ADA paratransit services, an individual's disability must prevent him or her from independently being able to use the fixed-route transit service, even if the vehicle itself is accessible to persons with disabilities (i.e., lift or ramp equipped).

The Census Bureau has determined that the 2000 Census overstated the number of people with disabilities. This overstatement occurred because of a confusing instruction in the Census questionnaire. In particular, the number of people with a "go outside the home disability" was substantially overstated as a result of a confusing skip pattern in the mail-back version of the Census long form.⁶

The Census's 2006 American Community Survey incorporated an improved questionnaire that eliminated the source of the overstatement. For California as a whole, the 2000 Census estimated that 19% of non-institutionalized people age five and older had a disability. The corrected estimate, based on the 2006 American Community survey, was 12%. Corrected results are not yet available for Imperial County. Therefore, disability tables in this section use the 2000 Census disability data.

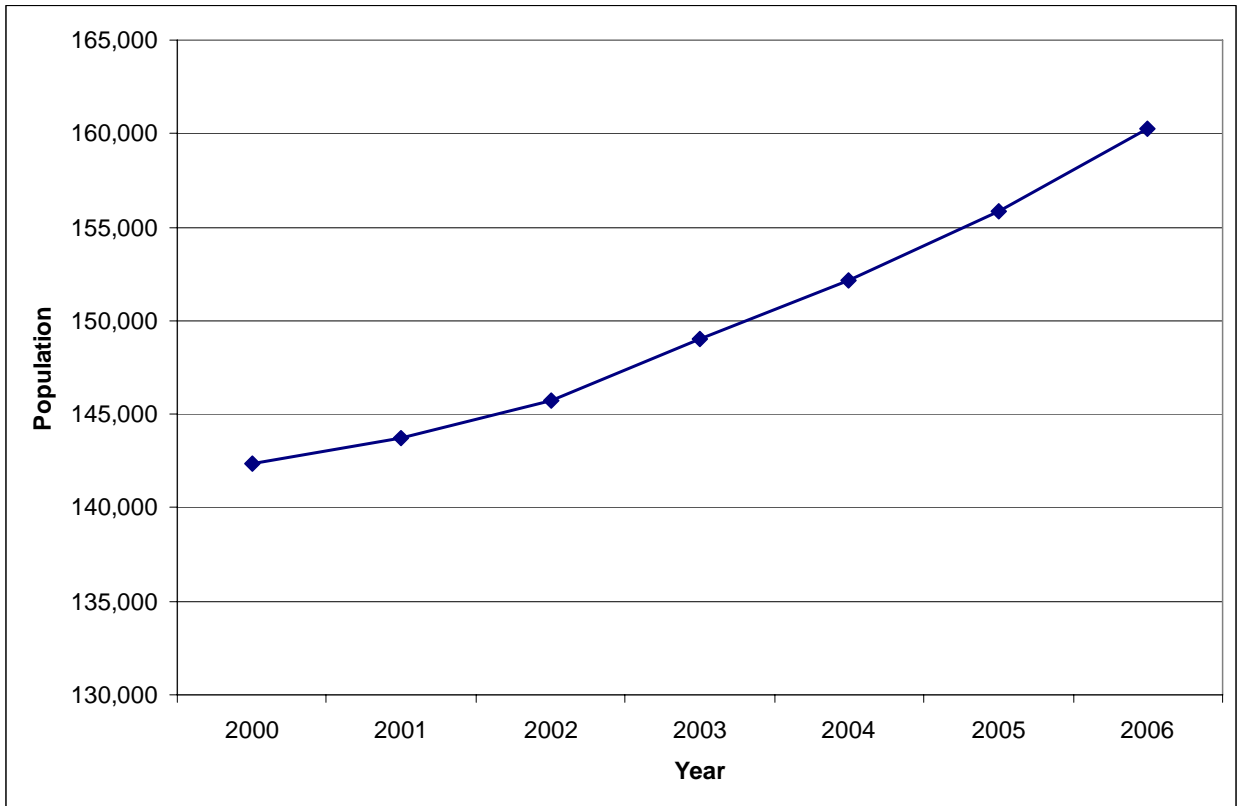
⁵ These questions were: 18. Does this person have a physical, mental, or other health condition that has lasted for 6 or more months and which (a) limits the kind or amount of work this person can do at a job? (b) prevents this person from working at a job? 19. Because of a health condition that has lasted for 6 or more months, does this person have any difficulty—(a) going outside the home alone, for example, to shop or visit a doctor's office? (b) taking care of his or her own personal needs, such as bathing, dressing, or getting around inside the home?

⁶ Sharon Stern and Matthew Brault, "Disability Data from the American Community Survey: A Brief Examination of the Effects of a Question Redesign in 2003," Feb. 2005. At www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/ACS_disability.pdf.

Population Growth

The county population grew by more than 12% from 2000 to 2006, increasing from 142,361 residents in 2000 to 160,301 residents in 2006, according to the US Census Annual Population Estimates. Figure 3-2 shows the population growth in Imperial County between 2000 and 2006.

Figure 3-2 Population Growth for Imperial County 2000-2006



Source: Census Annual Population Estimates

Projected Future Growth

The population of Imperial County is expected to grow steadily through 2030. Along with other parts of the country, the senior population of the county is growing at an even faster rate. In 2000, approximately 10% of the county population was over 65 years of age; by 2030 this proportion is expected to increase to 16%. Figure 3-3 below depicts the projected growth for Imperial County as a whole and for its senior population.

Figure 3-3 Projected Senior Population Growth for Imperial County

	2000	% Change 2000-2010	2010	% Change 2010-2020	2020	% Change 2020-2030	2030
Imperial County	143,763	32%	189,675	26%	239,149	19%	283,693
Population Over 65	14,520	37%	19,841	50%	29,819	53%	45,622

Source: California Department of Finance

Prison Population in Imperial County

Two prisons are located in Imperial County: Calipatria State Prison, and Centinela State Prison. Both are major employers within the county, each employing approximately 1,200 persons.⁷ The inmate populations within these facilities are significant, and can affect demographic analysis. The 2000 Census reports an institutionalized population of 10,398, which represents 7% of the total population of Imperial County.

The US Census counts prison populations as “group quarters.” Group quarters also include nursing homes, college dormitories, convents and similar places. Data for this population is included in some statistics but not others. The group quarters population is counted in the general population numbers, which affects the population figure, percentage of county population per city, and population over 65. However, disability data do not include the group quarters population. Some statistics for people over 65 years of age do not include the group quarters population. In addition, the group quarters population is not included in household income, family income, or non-family income statistics, but is included in estimates of per capita income.

Income Status

The median household income in Imperial County in 1999 was \$31,870, 33% lower than the median household income for California, which was \$47,493. The median household income for the City of Imperial, however, is even higher than the state average at \$49,451. The percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line was significantly higher for Imperial County than for California as a whole (23% vs. 14%). However, the proportion of residents in the City of Imperial living below the federal poverty line is actually lower than for the state of California

⁷ California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

(12% vs. 14%). Figure 3-4 compares the income status of the State of California, Imperial County and its four largest cities.

Figure 3-4 Income Status for Imperial County (1999)

Area	Median Household Income	% of Individuals Below Poverty Level
California	\$47,493	14%
Imperial County	\$31,870	23%
El Centro	\$33,161	23%
Calexico	\$28,929	26%
Brawley	\$31,277	27%
Imperial	\$49,451	12%

Source: 2000 Census

One useful tool to better pinpoint low-income pockets in the county is to review data from the State Department of Education, which shows the percentage of the enrolled public school students in each district that receive a free or reduced-price lunch. Based on 2007 data, it is noteworthy that many of Imperial County’s communities have at least 75% of the student population enrolled in these meal programs: in Calipatria, Calexico, Heber, Holtville, and in the San Pascual and Seeley School Districts. In most other cities and communities, at least one-half of the student population is enrolled in a free or reduced-price lunch program, substantiating the very high levels of poverty and low-income households noted in the 2000 Census data.

Employment

Figure 3-5 below lists the nine largest employers in Imperial County. The major employers consist of governmental, educational and agricultural entities. Imperial County is home to two state prisons. In addition, the county is one of California’s major agricultural producers, with a large amount of agricultural land located in the Imperial Valley. According to the California Employment Development Department, as of December 2007 the unemployment rate in the county was 18%, which is quite high.

Figure 3-5 Largest Employers in Imperial County

Company	Category	City
Central Union High School	Elementary and Secondary Schools	El Centro
Department of Corrections	Public Administration (Government)	Multiple
El Centro Regional Medical Center	Hospitals	El Centro
E-Z Labor	Personnel Supply Services	Brawley
Imperial County	Public Administration (Government)	Multiple
Imperial County Office of Education	Elementary and Secondary Schools	Multiple
Imperial Irrigation District	Irrigation System	Multiple
Imperial Valley College	Colleges & Universities	Imperial
U.S. Gypsum	Concrete Gypsum & Plaster Products	Plaster City

Sources: California Employment Development Department and California Center for Border and Regional Economic Studies

Access to a Vehicle

Eleven percent of households in Imperial County do not have access to a vehicle, which is slightly higher than the statewide average of 9%. In Calexico as much as 15% of the population do not have access to a vehicle, and in Imperial only 5% do not have a vehicle available to them. A significantly greater number of households where the head of household is over 65 years of age do not have access to a vehicle in both Imperial County as a whole and its three largest towns. However, in Imperial, only 6% of households where the head of household is over 65 do not have access to a vehicle. Figure 3-6 summarizes the percent of households with no vehicle available for both the overall population and the population where the head of household is over 65.

Figure 3-6 Households with No Vehicle Available

Area	All Households	Head of Household Over 65
California	9%	17%
Imperial County	11%	20%
El Centro	12%	25%
Calexico	15%	31%
Brawley	14%	25%
Imperial	5%	6%

Source: 2000 Census

Population/Employment Density

A Population/Employment Matrix was created to present existing demographic components of the study area. The Population/Employment Matrix presents concentrations of population and employment at the census block-group level. The matrix is based on 2000 Census data for population and 2000 CTPP (Census Transportation Planning Package) data for employment numbers. In order to generate the matrix, density of population and employment were calculated for each block-group. Then the population and employment density values were categorized into three classes each, both using the quantile method which places an equal number of values into each class. This identified a 1, 2 or 3 value (lowest, middle, and highest) for each. Once combined, the Population/Employment Matrix contains nine values, from a low population, low employment density (1,1 = 1) to a high population, high employment density (3,3 = 9).

Resultant Matrix Values

Population, values 1-3	7	8	9
	4	5	6
	1	2	3
Employment, values 1-3			

The matrix values were color coded and applied to a map of Imperial County, as seen in Figure 3-7. Most of Imperial County has a fairly low population and employment density. However, there are certain concentrations of population and employment densities that are extremely high in many of the county’s largest cities, including Imperial, El Centro, Holtville, Brawley, and Calexico. In these concentrated areas, the population density can reach as high as 19,000 persons per square mile and 5,000 jobs per square mile.

This page intentionally left blank.

